

Immigration reforms that would've helped Indians in America blocked by Senate Parliamentarian

Synopsis

Lawyers said that this development would make it difficult for the reforms to be passed as part of this bill. Rajiv S Khanna, managing partner at immigration.com said that this barrier would be very difficult to overcome.



This provision, if approved, would have impacted nearly 200,000 legal immigrants in the US who are in line for a greencard. Over half of these are Indian nationals who face long wait times on account of annual country caps.

The proposed pathway to citizenship for Indians in line for a greencard in the US is unlikely to be cleared as part of the ongoing Budget reconciliation bill. On Sunday, the Senate Parliamentarian rejected the push by Democrats to include a pathway to legal status as part of the spending bill on the grounds that this was a change to immigration policy which 'substantially outweighs the budgetary impact of the change.' These provisions had already been cleared by the House of Representatives last week. Indians in the US, primarily H-1B visa holders, who are waiting for their green cards would be hit the hardest by this, as current wait times run into decades. This bill would have sped up the process and introduced a clear pathway to citizenship for their dependents who currently age out and lose their legal status on turning 21.

Lawyers said that this development would make it difficult for the reforms to be passed as part of this bill. Rajiv S Khanna, managing partner at immigration.com said that this barrier would be very difficult to overcome.

This provision, if approved, would have impacted nearly 200,000 legal immigrants in the US who are in line for a greencard. Over half of these are Indian nationals who face long wait times on account of annual country caps. Another part of the immigration provisions calls to provide a clear pathway to residency for children of long term visa holders like H-1B, L-1, E-1 and E-2 who face the risk of aging out and losing legal status on turning 21 if their green card applications have not been processed. Several of these children have spent the greater part of their lives in the US, but have to self-deport, or often apply for a student visa when this happens.

“I am deeply disappointed in the Parliamentarian’s decision tonight, but the fight for immigration reform will continue. Senate Democrats have prepared an alternative proposal for the Parliamentarian’s consideration in the coming days,” said Senator Dick Durbin, who was among those supporting the inclusion of the immigration changes said on social networking platform Twitter.

Chuck Schumer, Senate Majority Leader of the Democrats said that they would continue to fight to provide lawful status to immigrants as part of the reconciliation bill. He said that ‘fixing our broken immigration system was a moral and economic imperative.’